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# **MASSES**

**JULY, 1929**

**15 Cents**



*Undeclared Arm—Painting by Eitaro Ishigaki*

## **THE SOUTH AWAKES**

**BILL DUNNE on  
GASTONIA**

**:**

**MARY HEATON VORSE on  
ELIZABETHTON**

**Michael Gold, Erwin Piscator, Wm. Gropper, Louis Lozowick, Adolph Dehn**



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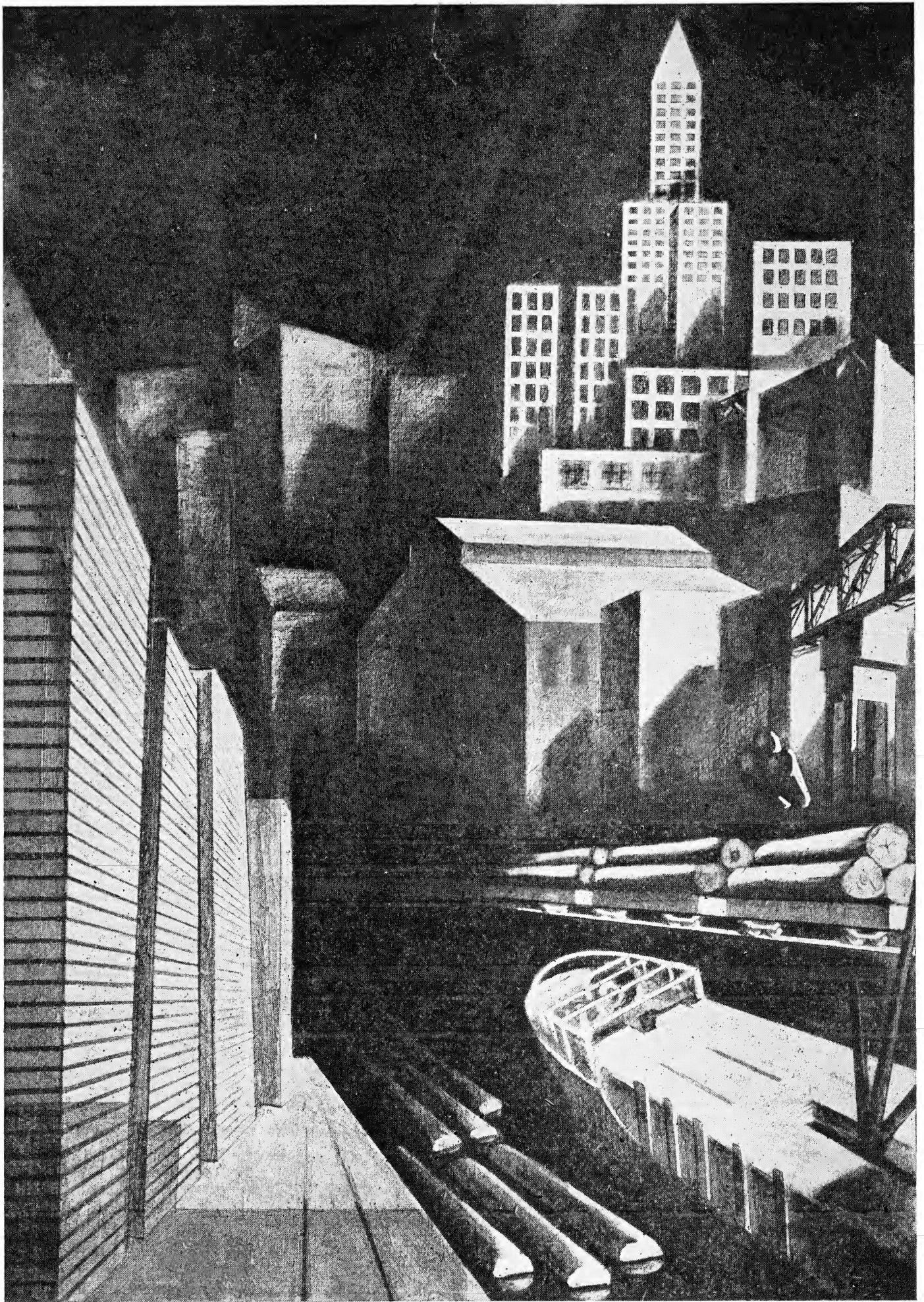
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## **SEATTLE**

# NEW MASSES

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## GASTONIA: A BEGINNING

By **BILL DUNNE**

Gastonia is to the textile industry of the south what Pittsburgh and Gary are to the steel industry, Centralia and Everett to the lumber industry, Butte to the metal mining industry.

Under the domination of the Manville-Jenckes company Gastonia has come to symbolize the economic and political hegemony of the textile barons in the south—particularly in states of North Carolina. Gastonia is a "company union." The city and county officials are as much a part of the machinery of the Manville-Jenckes company as are their looms and spindles. The middle class has no independent existence. Merchants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, preachers worship at the shrine of Manville-Jenckes. They are the most ardent defenders of the company and its whole system of robbery and oppression down to its last detail.

The shibboleths of the old south have been refurbished and adjusted to the service of the new ruling class—the textile capitalists who have replaced or are rapidly replacing the old landed aristocracy. Southern patriotism, god, heaven, home, fundamentalism and the fireside, white supremacy—these old catch words are worked overtime in behalf of the new exploiters whose policy and deeds duplicate in many respects the horrors of the early English factory system.

Economic domination expresses itself in complete control of the political machinery in Gaston county. Those fair-minded persons who chatter about the majesty of the law and the necessity for reverence for and obedience to it, should live for a while in Gaston county.

If one carries out the commands of the Manville-Jenckes company and its agents, if one accepts the wages and working conditions the company imposes and makes no complaint, if one takes no issue with the flood of obscene company propaganda poured out on the community through the columns of the *Gastonia Gazette*, through the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs—in all of which Major A. L. Bulwinkle, chief counsel and agent-provocateur-in-chief for Manville-Jenckes is the high cockalorum—if one simply works and absorbs enough nourishment to work again and says nothing, one is a law-abiding and loyal American.

The National Textile Workers Union profaned the shrine. It led a strike in the Loray mill—the holy of holies. Thousands and thousands of dollars have been spent by Manville-Jenckes in preserving this inner temple of the cotton textile industry. To the southern textile barons the Loray mill represented the goal for which they all strive—a slave-pen impregnable to assault by union organizers, where no worker dared breathe discontent.

The strike with its mass picketing, its well-organized relief and its systematic education of the strikers in the fundamentals of

the class struggle, its mobilization of the women, the youthful workers and the children into disciplined battalions, the appearance of the Communist Party as a force in the textile industry—all this in the stronghold of the textile barons aroused a sadistic fury expressing itself in a reign of terror that has had few precedents in any country.

Troops were called in, the strikers' hall and the Workers International Relief headquarters were destroyed—provisions defiled and thrown into the street—by a masked mob after the police had obligingly arrested and disarmed the workers guarding the hall.

Some vacant property was rented, the relief headquarters housed in tents and a new union hall and office established.

The troops were withdrawn and the task of intimidating, beating and jailing strikers and sympathizers—men and women—placed in the hands of the regular police forces and special deputies.

As in other company towns, the Manville-Jenckes corporation has any one it wants sworn in as a special deputy. It has organized under the command of Major Bulwinkle its "Committee of One Hundred"—a band of company hangers-on and payroll patriots with a sprinkling of professional thugs and gunmen. Beatings and arrests made by the regular police forces and this fascist gang were regular daily occurrences.

The N.T.W. members organized a guard for their headquarters to prevent a repetition of the raid on and the destruction of their hall. The strike was not called off and the strikers who went back to work did so with the knowledge that another strike had to come—and to prepare for it. Large numbers of workers were blacklisted and they and their families were—and are still supported by the W.I.R.

### 2. STRIKE!

On June 5 plans were completed for another walkout from the Loray mill. The workers inside had arranged for a picket line of strikers to march past the mill. This was to be the signal for the walkout, set for the afternoon of June 7. The company spies had learned of this plan. Inside the mill they were busy trying to terrorize the workers. The "Committee of One Hundred" was armed and in readiness. The police forces were ordered to be on hand to give a legal color to what the company intended to be an orgy of brutality in which there would undoubtedly have been many deaths of strikers and organizers. The instructions were to get Fred Beal, southern organizer for the N.T.W. at all costs.

At the meeting which was held at the union headquarters before the picket line started eggs and rocks were thrown at Beal by





*Drawn by William Gropper*

company agents. One of them raised his gun to fire at Beal but a striker grabbed his arm and the bullet went into the ground.

The picket line was met by police and deputies at what is called the Airline railway tracks. There one of the deputies knocked a grayhaired woman down and told her he would "shoot her brains out." The old lady got up, stretched out her arms and told him: "Go ahead and shoot, you yellow cur, I'm ready to die." The police clubbed indiscriminately. They choked Vera Bush and dragged Sophie Melvin by the hair. The picket line turned back and one striker started to walk home down the railway track. Two deputies knocked him down. As he lay with his back across a rail one of them jumped up and down on his stomach. The other said: "Go ahead, let's kill the son-of-a—." The deputies were heard to say: "Come on let's go to the tents and kill them all."

Most of the strikers returned to the union and relief headquarters. Then came Police Chief Aderholt with four officers. They jumped out of their car and as they advanced on to the union property one of the strikers challenged them and asked them if they had a warrant. One of them replied: "We don't need any god-damned warrant. We got all the warrant we need." Three of the officers seized the guard, knocked or threw him to the ground and began to beat him with revolver butts and kick him—to "stomp" him as they say in Gastonia. One of the other strikers, standing near the union building, called to the police: "Turn him loose! Turn him loose!" One of the officers turned and fired at him. The general shooting in which Aderholt was fatally shot, and four other officers and Joseph Harrison, a union organizer, wounded, followed.

The "Committee of One Hundred" led by Bulwinkle came soon afterwards, raided the headquarters, broke into and searched workers homes all night long, beat strikers and dragged them to jail. Patrols were placed on all roads. No one was allowed to leave or enter Gastonia. The records of the N.T.W. were seized. The city proper and the mill district became a hunting ground in which workers were pursued like wild animals.

More than one hundred arrests were made. The prisoners were held incommunicado. Tear gas was forced into cells occupied by eight men and six women. Numbers were beaten to make them "confess."

### 3. LYNCH THEM!

Lynch talk was everywhere. An attempt was actually made to lynch Fred Beal, arrested in Spartanburg and brought to the Monroe jail through South Gastonia for the convenience of the company thugs. Attorney Jimison, representing all the prisoners, was told by city officials that his life was in danger in Gastonia.

The *Gastonia Gazette* called openly for the blood of the strikers and organizers. In no American community have more brazen appeals been made for mass murder. The appeal failed because there was no response from the class which makes up the overwhelming majority of the population—the mill workers. It was impossible to give a lynching the requisite appearance of being a popular outburst.

Fourteen strikers and organizers are held without bail on two charges—murder and assault with intent to kill. 57 strikers and organizers are held in \$2000 bail on the charge of assault with intent to kill.

The prosecution has engaged 16 attorneys. Every lawyer in Gastonia with one exception has been retained by Manville-Jenckes. Major Bulwinkle, chief counsel for the company, was engaged by the city council as special prosecutor after mill officials invaded the city hall en masse.

In addition to Bulwinkle, Hoey, Wooltz, Dolley, Whitaker and Magnum of the prosecution staff are attorneys for various textile companies. Clyde Hoey is considered the best attorney in the state. He is a brother-in-law of Governor Gardner.

Legally the prosecution has no case. It will try to railroad the defendants by perjured witnesses and pressure on the jury. It will try to make the issue Communism versus Americanism. It will try to split the local strikers from the "outsiders."

The witnesses who swore to the complaints on which the warrants were issued are of the lowest type of human beings—ex-police officers who have been fired for beating a woman with a blackjack, denizens of Gastonia's little underworld who have just been released after doing a six months sentence, deputies who have been the most brutal towards the strikers, petty thieves and panhandlers—seven in all.

With nationwide interest in the case it is difficult even in Gastonia to railroad workers on such testimony. Consequently the stage is being set to prove a dark conspiracy—to show that



*Drawn by William Gropper*



the police were deliberately lured to the headquarters so they could be shot down. With this scheme it is proposed to counter the defense claim that workers have a right to protect their persons and property from armed attacks—especially when they have been the victims of a previous attack.

What actually occurred is about as follows: (The information gathered from dozens of workers, strikers and others working in the Loray mill, can lead to no other conclusion.)

In order to forestall the impending strike the Manville-Jenckes company had issued instructions to destroy the tent colony and scatter the strikers and organizers by any necessary means. The police attack on the picket line was to have been followed by an attack on the headquarters and the strikers there.

Aderholt and his officers were to have used their authority to gain entrance to the headquarters property—they were the "legal" shock troops. The "Committee of One Hundred" was to come in then and do its stuff.

The resistance put up by the strikers upset this plan somewhat but the "Committee of One Hundred," with white bands tied around their sleeves so they could identify one another, came later. They carried out the original plan—wrecked the headquarters, beat and arrested strikers and organizers. The intention was to smash the union, to drive the organizers out of Gaston county.

#### 4. MANVILLE-JENCKES PARADISE

What is the background of this struggle? What are the conditions which the Manville-Jenckes company, its city and county and state officials are trying to maintain?

We quote from testimony given before the Committee on Manufactures of the United States Senate on May 8, 1929. This particular section of the testimony is entitled "Information Received From the Officers of Various Chambers of Commerce in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee." Joseph S. Wray, *secretary of the Gastonia chamber of commerce*, writes to the representative of a northern textile manufacturer:

"Wages in Gastonia range from 18 to 20 cents to 30 cents (per hour) for skilled workers . . . Children from 14 to 18 years of age can *only work 11 hours a day*." (Emphasis mine).

From another chamber of commerce secretary:

"From the viewpoint of the manufacturer the labor laws in North Carolina are as lenient as any in existence. The law at present allows a 60-hour week and an 11-hour day. There are no further restrictions on either day or night operation except as to the age limit of boys and girls. The age limit on boys and girls is the same and is a minimum of 14 years for daytime operation and 16 years for night operation."

A worker in the Loray mill runs 38 cards for 11 hours per night, five nights per week. During the night shift 9,120 pounds of cotton are run through these cards.

The worker's wage is \$2.84 for 11 hours or \$14.20 for the five shift week. The surplus value is approximately \$25.52 per night or \$127.60 per week per worker. (9,120 pounds of cotton works up into 56,720 yards of cloth selling wholesale at the plant for 5 cents per yard.) It is sold to mill hands for 60 cents per yard.

These statistics give a picture of the Manville-Jenckes paradise. It is to keep this rich field of exploitation, now invaded by the militant National Textile Workers Union, that the company is trying to send 14 workers to the electric chair and railroad 57 more to prison for long terms.

Not since the battle in Homestead have workers replied with greater determination and courage to the attacks of the armed forces of the capitalist class. The battle in the tent Colony in Gastonia symbolizes the advance of a new contingent of the American proletariat—the working class of the south. They take their place in our ranks as the echo of the gunfire in Gastonia is heard around the world. These new troops come as the class struggle sharpens everywhere and the shadow of imperialist war grows darker. They have been baptized in the fire of open struggle and have learned that the distinction in the south is not, any more than it is in the north, between American and "foreigner", or between white and black, but between class and class—the owning and robbing capitalist class and the dispossessed and propertyless working class.

Only the swift rallying of the working class of the nation to the defense of these workers can tear them from the grip of the

textile lords and their government. Around the International Labor Defense must be built the most powerful movement that has arisen in this country. The issue is clear: Must workers, men, women and children on strike, against who are mobilized all the black forces of capital, submit indefinitely to being driven, clubbed and slaughtered like sheep?

There is no doubt as to what the answer of the American masses will be. It will be in the same spirit in which the answer of the workers in the Gastonia district is being made. More requests for application cards of the National Textile Workers Union are coming than ever before. Around Gastonia is being welded a powerful chain of mill committees. The union is here to stay. It has survived the worst attack the textile barons could organize. The defense of its members and organizers is a sacred duty of the working class.

Let the bosses make Communism the issue in the trial. Communists are in the front ranks of the struggle here and it is against the Communist members of the union that the main fire of the prosecution is leveled. The southern textile workers will judge—by deeds.

The textile workers in North Carolina were betrayed by the bureaucrats of the United Textile Workers in 1920-21. No murder charges were preferred against these traitors. They retreated without a battle and left the workers to the mercy of the bosses. The Communist trade union organizers face the electric chair side by side with the local leaders.

For workers this is decisive. Fred Beal and Louis McLaughlin, New Bedford and Gastonia, north and south, communist organizer and southern textile worker, both charged with the same crime of rebellion against the mill barons and their armed forces—this is "the new south," the new south where the working class is forming its battalions for the great struggles to which the Gastonia conflict was a preliminary skirmish.

## CAROLINA

*First came the mill,  
Or came the factory or came the mine  
To offer means of living out a life:  
Paying a wage but still  
Demanding some return of given time,  
A life for life.*

*Here was a village town  
Surrounded by a fringe of lazy hills,  
Serenely passive to the march of time.  
But the mill came down,  
Or the factory, or mine,  
Filling the valley with the smoke that kills  
And drives away the laurel and the pine,  
Beating them down  
From the hills.*

*And the long line  
Of village men and mountain men go down,  
Their iron wills  
Corroded by the faintly pleasant whine  
Of shuttle-cocks of mills,  
Of hoisting drums of mines,  
The song of progress in a village town.*

*The women frown  
At childbirth with its customary ills  
Because it must exact a certain fine  
Of wages from the mills.  
And they go down  
Beneath the load of industry in town,  
As went the pine  
And as their men go down.*

FREDERIC COVER.

# ELIZABETHTON SITS ON A POWDER KEG

By MARY HEATON VORSE

In Elizabethton there is a vast wooden shed called the Tabernacle. Originally it was built for Happy Valley's great revival meetings.

May 25th it was filled with the striking rayon workers. They had been suddenly summoned to hear "peace" terms gotten by U. S. Mediator, Anna Weinstock and a committee of five workers. These workers had not been elected democratically. They had been chosen by the U.T.W. organizers. The news that strike settlement was under way came to the rank and file of the strikers as unexpectedly as a stroke of lightning.

Anna Weinstock, the only woman Mediator in the Department of Labor, read aloud the terms offered by the Bemberg-Glanzstoff Corporation. She read with all the elation of a personal victory!

1. All employes shall register immediately.

2. If an employe is not reinstated definite reasons shall be given such an employe, and if he feels he is being discriminated against he may refer his case to an impartial person for a hearing and decision. The impartial person to sit in such cases shall be E. T. Willson. (Willson is the company's employment and personnel manager whose appointment was announced shortly before the meeting was called to vote on the terms.)

3. The management will not discriminate against an employe because of membership in any organization, nor because of legitimate and lawful activities in such organization as long as they are carried on outside the plants.

4. For the purpose of adjusting grievances which may arise, the management will meet a committee of its employes.

While she read, the great auditorium was filled with murmurs and restless shifting of the 2,000 strikers. She finished. There was amazed silence. Then a great shout of "No!"

Boos came from the packed platform and "Boos" were re-echoed back from the crowd on the floor. The will of the workers had spoken, loudly and spontaneously. Their refusal was emphasized by anger.

Discrimination. That is written all through the settlement. Dr. Arthur Mothwurf, President of the corporation, has stated in today's papers who he will take back. He has made it clear enough. "We must decline to employ persons of undesirable character!"

The workers had not struck for such an agreement. The majority of the strikers were sure that once the strike was won, they would have better working conditions, wages and hours. Strikers would say to you, "We'll have the eight hour day when we win the strike" or "They'll recognize the Union before we'll quit."

The strikers and the leaders confronted each other. There was amazement on both sides. Amazement at the terms, amazement on the part of the U. T. W. officials that the strikers filled the air with boos of derision.

The great company of strikers were like a person with one will. They were like a swift runner who has been checked with the goal in sight. Victory was what they wanted—not compromise.

For nearly three hours the A. F. of L. officials talked to the strikers; they entreated, they pleaded with them. They dazed the strikers with words, confused them and deadened them with speech and argument. Throughout the talking, whenever the settlement was re-read, "Boos!" came from the strikers.

Had a single voice told them to resist the settlement terms the strikers would have arisen in jubilation. They had only begun to fight.

A standing vote was asked for. They voted for the settlement. Silent and angry, they filed out. No applause of victory, no happy buzz of congratulation. One tall boy shouted:

"They broke the strike!"

Afterwards they swarmed around the streets like clusters of angry bees. You should hear them saying: "It's a sell-out!"

Bowles' rooming house is strike headquarters. This was where Mack Elliot stayed. He is a machinist and very high paid for Elizabethton. He had just built a new bungalow. The strikers

used to meet there. Then his house was dynamited. There is nothing left of it now but kindling.

Other active strikers and sympathizers live here too. Every night two boys guard in front and in back to see that the place won't be dynamited or that no one will be kidnapped. Though the strike has been "settled," the state troops are still in town and the boys are still guarding headquarters. Everybody is restless. There is a great deal of coming and going.

About midnight, one after another, there are six detonations of dynamite. There has hardly been a night where there has not been shooting, dynamite explosions or fire. We have gotten used to them. Tonight we are on edge, and we appear, each one at our doors, like people in a farce.

White, one of the strike leaders, with several of the strikers, comes out of a room where he has been discussing the settlement. Mr. and Mrs. Bowles are there. The guards join us. We bring up chairs and all sit down and talk around the cold cast iron stove.

White begins. "I don't like this settlement. I don't like it at all. They ain't pinned down any. It's just like the other settlement—going to be discrimination, I say."

Bowles declares: "There's holes in that agreement."

"Holes! There's holes as big as yore garage door—holes big enough to drive a hearse through."

"We'll all be out again soon enough," the youngsters say. The youngsters don't care—strikes are fun.

The older people express their sense of betrayal and of disillusion. They were conscious that the strikers were marching along on a high tide of victory. The settlement has come and it is destined to amputate the local leadership from the body of the strikers. The leaders will be sent into backwaters of inaction. The will and brains, the eyes and head, of the Union will be chopped off.

Monday morning the office registration opens. From dawn on, a milling crowd surrounded it. Strikers come from the hills and from distances as far as 20 miles. It was a crowd filled with foreboding. "Sell-out" was on everybody's lips. They began to stream back to headquarters. By 9 o'clock the Tabernacle was filled with excited people. People had come from the hills who had had no part in the voting.

There is a sense of riot in the air. People spring up from their seats to speak. None of their leaders are there, all except John Edelmann. They are all over in Johnson City in the John Sevier Hotel.

Word went around—"The Communists have come." William Kelly and the other leaders are telephoned for in a hurry.

McGrady tells the press that the Communists have stirred up the trouble.

At last, the leaders begin to come. William Kelly, wiping his perspiring brow, whispers: "Beal's in the audience!" The Citizen Committee, hysterically swear out a warrant for Weisbord.

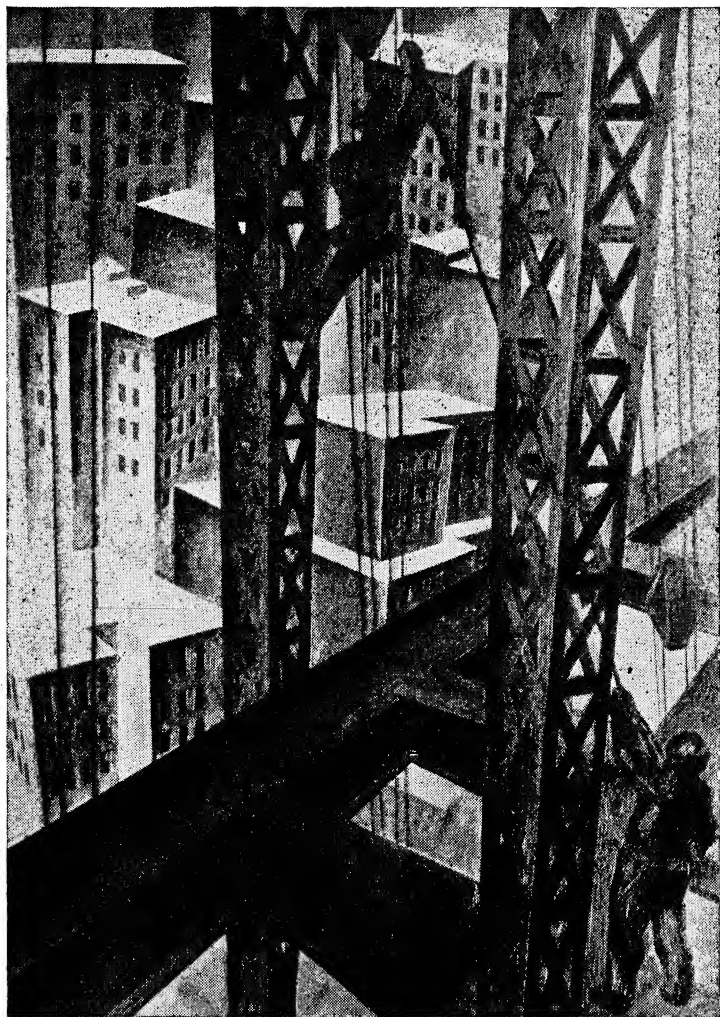
Down in the audience, Fred Beal sits quietly. He and a woman organizer have driven from Gastonia with two Gastonia strikers. He asks permission to bring greetings from the textile workers of Gastonia to those of Elizabethton. He is denied the floor. What if he were to get up and denounce the settlement. What would happen then with this restless, dissatisfied crowd? That is what every one is thinking.

## The Electric Air

*there was no longer peace in the heavens,  
for the airplanes rode hard on the eagle  
and now that the radiograms  
make hieroglyphs in the air,  
not even a bluebird can venture forth  
without fear of being electrocuted.*

—NORMAN MACLEOD.





*Painting by Louis Lozowick*

## ABOVE THE CITY

# TEAMSTERS

By JOSEPH KALAR

Teamsters stink of horses: pungently of equine flatulence: of pine sweating perfumed pitch under the persuasive tongue of a blistering sun: damply of river slime. The scaling shack is heavy with the smell of teamsters: of tobacco juice frying under the steampipe: of cigarets with brown guts drooping raggedly out of frayed ends: of grey tobacco ash. Pools of phlegm gleam whitely under the glare of the electric light. Bits of horsedung, stamped loose from boots, join juice of tobacco, join tobacco ash and phlegm.

Teamsters talk. Ragged ends of sentences cross and retreat, weave and interweave. Words are shot like bullets: words walk languidly out of the door. Words with the naked directness of an uppercut: brutal slimy words: brutal laughing words. Rabelaisian obscenities. Sex. Drink. Strikes. The World War. Horses. Teamsters talk lovingly of horses: Mike horse, Dick horse, Pete horse. Teamsters talk of days spent in lousy camps in zero weather: damp stinking socks hanging steaming over a redhot stove: air so saturated with stink it made hair grow on one's chest. Talk of road jobs, of mucking. Talk of the Big Dick (North Dakota) and shocking and threshing wheat under a blistering sun from early morning until late evening. Talk of the irony of staring at horserumps hour after hour, day after day. Talk laughingly of Bert, the studhorse, his magnificent ex-

ploits, his conquests. Talk of the good old days when greenlumber skinnners would drink beautifully on the job, with a divine disregard of bosses and jobs. Talk of loads toppling over, talk of teamsters buried under loads of lumber, talk of broken legs, and broken arms.

And on the scaler's desk, the "buckingboard" urging them to work. The "buckingboard" is the cunning discovery of a superefficiency genius with more than a passing acquaintance with psychology. The scaler marks the trips the skinnners have made: the Idea is Rivalry. Teamsters moving languidly like apathetic flies, numbed by the "yellowdog," glance at the "buckingboard" and are moved to sudden furious activity. The Idea born in the orderly convolutions of an efficiency "engineer's" brain: Teamsters take pride in their work, and a good teamster hates to be the last on the list. The scaler jokingly writes a notice: "Tom Morgan wins the little red apple today, Fred Douglas wins the green apple, and Jim Olson wins the little horseapple," and hangs it on the wall. The tale is told of an old Skinner who developed a fierce rivalry for honors with a very young and expert teamster. He made many trips before the younger Skinner discovered his intention: then the fun began. The young Skinner, expert at throwing a tailchain over a load, and rolling it off, soon left his rival far behind. The old Skinner was mortified. The next day he brought three little red apples to the young teamster as a peace offering, as an admission of his defeat.

Teamsters look at the greenlumber chain. "By the . . . , there's a load right up to the . . . roof. Guess we'll have to do a bit." The scaling shack empties. The scaler sits on his stool smiling to himself, his gaze glides languidly out of the window to the sawmill, walks lazily over the greenlumber chain, walks down the road, walks back and fixes vacantly on a little pool of brown phlegm frying under the steampipe.

## 2.

"Grandma" looks like a thug caricatured devilishly by Gropper. His nose is twisted sharply to one side, his lips balloon thickly over large decayed teeth. As he talks, his eyes quicken and bloom into flame. His head leans heavily on a shoulder. Words pour in an avalanche of froth from his lips. There is no topic so trivial, so unimportant, that does not animate "Grandma" into a fierce explosion of argument. He talks always as though he were contending with an invisible sinister force. He talks of the weather angrily, spitting with obscene regularity, punctuating phrases with a vile thwooh of flying sputum.

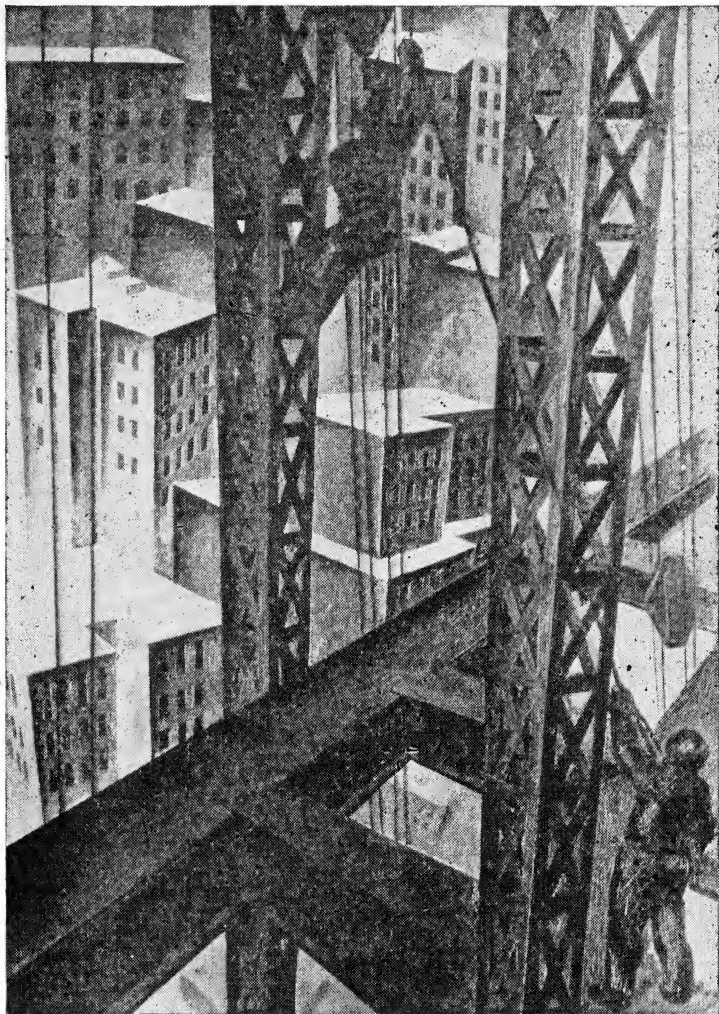
The teamsters throw tailchains over loads, and file into the shack, dropping heavily on the bench. They talk. Their laughter is loud and unforced, they call each other "bastard" and "sonofa—" laughingly. When "Grandma" comes into the shack, laughter is stifled in a dust of irritation. A thin film glides over eyes out of which laughter has gone. Eyes look apathetically at sputum on the floor and heavy brown shoes of the scaler.

Once "Grandma" served on the local police force and to him it meant that the peak of his life's curve had been reached. Over and over again he settles himself firmly on the bench, squares his shoulders defiantly, and begins—"Now when I was on the police force . . ." Tales of culprits nearly apprehended, glory within reach of hands thick with smell of leather and horses, hands lovingly grasping billyclub in a gesture acclaiming life's fruition and inevitable fulfillment. A proletarian forgetting lean days on a homestead in northern Minnesota, hot days in Montana, swirl of cinders in a roundhouse, in the lunacy of Authority.

The teamsters sit on the bench with heads bowed, resigned, twitching nervously at each thwooh of flying sputum. They try to speak, but words beat them down. "Grandma" has no directness of speech, he begins on a straightline, flies off on a tangent, makes a circle, loses himself in a froth of words, comes back to the straight line, begins again, hands gesturing hotly that he has not always been an Anonymity.

When he leaves to make another "trip," laughter flows back into eyes and eyes no longer regard gobs of peerless and snuff on the floor. Eyes laugh and say: Deliver us from people who talk too much!

**JULY, 1929**



*Painting by Louis Lozowick*

## **ABOVE THE CITY**



# TRANSITION—1929

By EDWARD NEWHOUSE

During the short-lived Hungarian Revolution of 1918 he was elected "commissar" of his class at the age of six. That was the insignificant beginning of the stream of communism that was to flow through his life.

The Hungarian Revolution was drowned in blood without his realizing its significance and for the next five years he lived the kind of life Anatole France must have led in his youth—playing ball, reading the classics voraciously, imbibing myriads of impressions with open-eyed amazement, drinking up the continental spirit—and spirits.

Because of communistic tendencies his father lost his influential position and the family moved to America. Here was a revolution, a sort of Hegelian antithesis, in the boy's life. His father working in a factory for sixteen dollars a week, the mother whom he admired and loved above everything slaving at home, the East side flat, the East side school, the ostensibly stupid teacher, the other children's ridicule of his outlandish speech and clothing... the boy first felt the feverish exasperation which comes to one confronted with the chaos of life.

However, he thought, America had its redeeming features. For instance he had been disgusted with the stupid, commercialized chauvinism prevalent in post-war continental Europe. Here it was different. "In America," said he "we have a different kind of a patriotism and liberty. It is the liberty for which the communards fought on the barricades in Paris; it is the liberty of which my great Hungarian poet, Petofi dreamed and for which he died; it is my kind of liberty." He pasted a flag with the picture of Washington in the center above his bed and every night, standing at attention, he recited the "I pledge allegiance, etc." fervently. This was a stage through which he quickly passed. He now smiles at it in his superficial moments and rages at it in his intense ones or, if you will, vice versa.

He picked up the language surprisingly fast and by the time he reached high school he returned to his classics—English classics this time, to be sure. As always he read avidly—Shakespeare, Dumas, Thackeray, Dickens. But he had lost his intellectual honesty. Due to incessant praises of proud teachers and parents, to the manifest inferiority, silent admiration and envy of his schoolmates, he became aware of his precocity. His knowledge and reading became a pose. He was deceiving others and deceiving himself. His first auto-erotic experience followed and it required a long time and an immeasurable amount of suffering before he overcame the habit.

Came disillusionment. The classics became an anomaly; his desire to write an affectation. He saw the futility of his stupid school work. He was wretched in his home life. He became prematurely senile and sophisticated—a crude little Joseph Wood Krutch.

Then the revelation... Upton Sinclair. Here was somebody who could offer an explanation to the perplexing chaos. Within a month he ran through Sinclair's books. Sinclair revived the old enthusiasm. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, Marx and Engels, Lenin, Plekhanov, Kautsky followed in quick succession. He was waging a difficult and surprisingly conscious fight against his immediate past, against the thousand little things which diverted his attention in the present. "Be light, make money, enjoy yourself, be sophisticated!" cried everything and everybody. "Study, sacrifice," said his communism. And over-shadowing the two, towering, stood an ominous distrust of himself, of the honesty of both these two dominating motives.

And here he must stop and wait for further developments since, chronologically speaking, that is the stage he has reached by June, 1929.



Drawn by Adolph Dehn

## WELSH MINERS

### THE WAIL

(At Florence, Arizona)

*Through lonely dusk I came a creep  
From off life's desert trail;  
I begged the Law to let me sleep  
One winter night in jail:  
The hinges barked, the lock reshut;  
And there I heard The Wail.*

*Across the stone, from wall to wall,  
Three wobblers grimly paced—  
Mexicans! So they rang the hall,  
Through time's terrific waste,  
With yearning chants of Mexico,  
Of millions peon-faced.*

*One fellow took to higher pitch;  
They climbed the wall of soul  
From bleeding oneness, niche by niche,  
Toward Union's lighted goal.  
They dropped—to wailings of despair  
Down in the mocking hole.*

*They tried again, three comrades doomed,  
Their only thought to try:  
The Wail for Union thus entombed,  
Oh it can never die!  
No more than freedom's urge can perish  
And skylarks quit the sky.*

—H. H. LEWIS.

**NEW MASSES**



*Drawn by Adolph Dehn*

**WELSH MINERS**

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**NEW MASSES**



*Drawn by Adolph Dehn*

**WELSH MINERS**

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# NOTES OF A RUHR MINER

By ED FALKOWSKI

## I. RUHR IN FLAMES.

The days are pale and gray with the smoke of a million chimneys. This smoke hangs over huge mushroom cities, over crumbling ancient villages, as permanently fixed as though it were the sky itself. Beneath this murky veil the Ruhr carries on its feverish existence.

But it is the night which brings out the significance of the Ruhr in tongues of golden flame wavering against the dark. Its thousand steel mills throw out signals of fire to the sky. From its innumerable coke ovens flames leap in giant spurts. And there is the endless jazz band of industrial music audible—starting and quitting whistles, engines dashing into the night leaving trails of hot cinders to mark their course; the throb of mills and factories, the bustle of mine shafts. Hearing this variety of sound one realizes the tremendous significance of the Ruhr.

But for workers there are no nights and days here. Industries grind on week on week without pausing from their mighty toil. Hollow-cheeked workmen may be seen going to work at 10 o'clock at night, at three A.M., at six, at all hours. The shuffling of feet on the sidewalks is as tireless as the whirr of wheels in the shop.

And in the tiny brick shacks which are the homes of the workers, wives rise at 3 A. M. to "fix supper for their men." Huts fast in slumber before midnight become filled with yellow brilliancy of kerosene lamps. The men are home from their shift. They are now eating a hot supper. The lit windows are festlights of silent joy at the man's safe return from his shift. For it often happens that a man departs for his work, and never returns any more.

## II. THE GREAT UNDERWORLD.

The eye is fascinated by powerful surfaces and skylines in the Ruhr. Massed steel furnaces, forests of smokestacks resembling canon aiming at the heavens; the maze of huge, dim structures which form the complex of a machine factory; cities caught in the spell of sudden importance, dreaming of growth.

But underneath this hurly-burly of important activity lies another world whose 360,000 inhabitants are, to the public, congealed into a tight and ungraspable solidity featured as a "problem." For the coal miner here, as everywhere else in our economic system, plays his tragic role of being "problematic" and "incomprehensible."

He is a "problem" because he protests against starvation. He is "incomprehensible" because he insists on fighting for the things that belong to him—his share of existence.

The life of a coal miner, lived thousands of feet below the earth's surface, takes on the mystery and color of a strangely fascinating calling. The public is acquainted with his appetite for beer, his ragged clothing, his humble shack, and his "rough" manners. He is, of the proletariat, a proletarian, for his trade seems to be the last of all desirable callings. In Germany as in the United States, he is the hardest worked, and the lowest paid of all workers.

It is often denied that mining is a "learned" trade at all. It is rather a fate, a sag in one's curve of destiny which flings one thousands of feet below the sunlight to dig for one's crust of bread. In this idea there may be much truth indeed. Yet there is a strange fascination to that underworld which cannot be compared to anything known in the outside world. Few miners, after their years of initiation are once over, would care to exchange with a carpenter or a factory hand in the world of sunlight and rain. In a peculiar way these men "belong." The secrets and silences of the mines are theirs. Theirs is indeed an inscrutable wisdom.

## III. ACADEMIES OF HURRYUP.

All industries are at present suffering the invasion of the academician. Germany has a surplus of engineers who are compelled to accept straw-boss jobs. It is common to find a university

trained man doing work which, years ago, was performed by "promoted" workers.

"Promotion" for the common toiler in Germany would be an insane dream if it were dreamed at all. But the worker is too aware of this to permit himself such a dream. Corporations prefer the university-trained man to fill the tiniest positions. The "attitude" of the akademiker is "safer."

The miners find themselves surrounded by bulldog-looking men almost bursting with self-pride and scorn for the working class. Inspectors, directors, state overseers, foremen, firemen, weathermen, bosses—a horde of officials enter the mines each day. Each in turn dutifully "bawls out" the miner. This starts with the early insults from the strawboss, and continues at intervals during the day. The more important the official, the louder his voice, the more terrific his abuse.

The miner dimly aware of 2,000,000 unemployed workers on the outside, feels the lump in his throat, but dares no utterance. He is thankful he can work at all.

Each day some effort is made to increase his pace. Production, in spite of acknowledged overproduction, seems never to be high enough. "We must get 11 cars per man out of here instead of 10," is the boss's "good morning" to the crew.

They shorten their lunch period; they knuckle into it, they bore into the seams of coal, scooping madly, they remove all of their clothes, and the bad air is soured with the smell of sweat. Eleven cars is their goal today. Next week it must reach twelve. The strawbosses congratulate themselves on being able to squeeze down the men.

They don't know what fires are burning inside of these smeary figures, greasy with hot sweat.

## IV. REVOLT IN THE RUHR?

The academician is the new strawboss, thinner blooded and more brutal than his forerunners who usually worked their way up to the top, and had some notion of a worker's hardships.

But these schooled men never had tried this work before. Their ideas are based purely on school theories. Hurryup systems are efficient systems even if they break down their victims. There are no more old miners in the Ruhr. Under the pressure of intensified speed-up, the life of the miner is decreasing rapidly.

Can the Ruhr miner revolt, fling off his chains of masters, and claim his portion of life? Those who remember the flaming days of the revolution in the Ruhr know how deep is the miner's hatred of his masters. It is even so in the steel mills, machine factories and hundreds of other colossal works concentrated in the tiny Westphalia corner.

The masters, aware of this, use every weapon available. Poverty wages, company houses and stores, to churches and schools, high-salaried staffs of overseers, welfare newspapers, patriotic activities, even secret black-listings, all directed against possible revolt among the workers.

Encouragement of large families by paying premiums on tenth children, free insurance, and aid toward the attainment of a home, is a successful instrument, for once the worker is burdened with a large brood of offspring, his ear is shut against his own better judgement.

But the speed up increases. The mark drops in value. Butter has given way to margarine, and malz coffee has replaced the expensive Java which, to carry the comparison to the United States, costs four dollars a pound. This life on the ragged edge threatens to be still further reduced.

The Ruhr miner endures and says little. But he has been seared in the smoke and cinders of 1919-20. He knows what barricades look like, and the war has taught him the frequent insanities of governments, and their instabilities. In the back of his head is a dream formed out of the bitterness and pain of his experience. And he knows that he may yet have to bide his time, but that in the end the day of reckoning for his masters must come. And he will be included among the judges.

# FLOYD DELL RESIGNS

By MICHAEL GOLD

May 23, 1929.

Dear Mike:

I've been intending for some time to ask to have my name taken off the list of contributing editors of the *Masses*. In spite of the fact that I was not actually a contributor, I at first wished to have my name associated with the magazine because it represented a partly Communist and at any rate rebellious literary tendency, with which I am in sympathy. However, what it seems chiefly to represent is a neurotic literary and pictorial æstheticism with which I am completely out of sympathy, and with which I would rather not be associated. Perhaps I am too impatient, or do not understand your editorial difficulties, but that is how I feel. So I hereby resign.

Yours for the Revolution,  
Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.

FLOYD DELL.

Dear Floyd:—

Someone in our office recently called up your home on a slight matter of business. Your wife answered with an indignation that was startling and unexpected. She would not permit our representative to talk to you.

The next morning came your letter of resignation. One can only read it and marvel. What explains all this sudden heat? None of us in the office has seen you for at least a year. We have criticized none of your books, or slandered you in gossip, or even thought about you. And here you and your wife have been storing up all this hatred against us.

I am not a psychoanalyst like yourself, but to my puzzled co-workers in the office I have explained the situation about as follows:

Floyd Dell is just another victim of American prosperity. He is making more money than he ever dreamed there was in the world, but deep in his mind is the knowledge of failure. He is an artistic and moral failure. It hurts. It makes him miserable. The only way he can overcome this inner critic is by destroying it, and by defiling and sneering out of existence everything in the outer world that keeps it alive.

Floyd Dell had a brief period of significance. All of us remember his adolescence. He was a literary revolutionist of some charm. Somehow in Iowa he had met H. G. Wells and Anatole France, and from the one he had assimilated geysers of wordy theory, and from the other a Gallic lightness in sex and science and "revolution."

At no time was Floyd Dell a real revolutionist. At all times he had a distaste for reality, for the strong smells and sounds and confusions of the class struggle. He had none of the contacts with workingmen and strikes and battles that John Reed made. He was a Greenwich Village playboy. Even in those days his main interests were centred in the female anatomy. It was considered daring at that time to indulge in free love. Now every Babbitt goes in for "affairs." But Floyd Dell was fresh and new then, for no other writer in America dared to be as frank about sex.

The war came. America became the richest country in the world. It developed a large, parvenu bourgeoisie. This class aspired to European sophistication. It had lots of time and money to spend. Golf and modern furniture and sex were some of its new-found hobbies. Floyd Dell, who had always written about sex, suddenly became popular. He made, probably to his own amazement, a lot of money in Sex. And the more money he made, the more he evidently had to earn. For he continues, year after year, to repeat the same adolescent clichés that once seemed so Gallic, so adequate and charming. It is a profitable "racket."

Bohemians and soulful bourgeois, these are the heroes and heroines of all his novels. And they are all silly and worthless people. No revolutionist could ever have issued such a series of

trivial novels. Only a shallow bourgeoisie would ever have stomachached them.

He says he is leaving the *New Masses* because we represent a "neurotic literary and pictorial æstheticism" with which he is out of sympathy.

This sounds familiar. I can remember several talks I had with Floyd Dell during the past four years. I can remember the time when I told him I had just read James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and considered it one of the few masterpieces of our times.

Then Floyd Dell, in a speech that lasted 45 solid minutes, tore James Joyce to tatters. Joyce was not a great writer, he said. Joyce was a neurotic, a coprophile, and therefore could not write.

Theodore Dreiser was a neurotic and could not write. Eugene O'Neill the same. Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Carl Sandburg, and so on and so on—all were neurotic, and therefore no writers.

The impression I gathered was that there was only one writer in America who was thoroughly sane, and completely psychoanalyzed, and therefore a great writer and revolutionist.

I know that none of the writers I defended against Floyd Dell are revolutionists. But most of them write out of the depths of their individual pain. They are sincere emotionally. They are true to something inside themselves. Floyd Dell has become a skimmer of surfaces, a diletante. He shrinks from all the great joys and sorrows. His writing is safe, tepid and shallow. No young man or woman reading Floyd Dell will ever set off for a vagabond trip around the world, or will throw himself into a strike's furnace. It is literature for the most mediocre and unadventurous portions of the bourgeoisie. It is the old chamber-maid literature of Bertha M. Clay regilded with a film of modern sophistication.

Floyd Dell has written a biography of Upton Sinclair. It was a good job, and I would recommend to Mr. Dell that he read this book again. It may teach him something of the hard, lonely path a revolutionary must walk in this country. It may suggest to him a few new themes for his future novels.

But enough of Floyd Dell's writing. Let us remember a few of his deeds during the past five years.

I happen to know Eugene O'Neill for about twelve years. Recently I came to know Ernest Hemingway personally. Neither of these writers signs his letters, like Floyd Dell, "*Yours for the Revolution*." Neither claims to be anything but an individualist, and neither has had the revolutionary background of Floyd Dell.

Yet neither of these men has ever played the cheap literary careerist game Mr. Dell is now busily engaged in. Neither man has taken to wearing dress suits, or spends most of his social hours with the gang of literary racketeers who have made of New York such a horrible and dangerous place for the young writer who still respects his mind's integrity.

Mr. Dell, the "revolutionist," has not had a moment's time in the past five years to walk on the picket line of a strike, or to write a single article for a revolutionary paper, or to lecture to a group of workers, or at the least, let us say, to favor some radical mass-meeting with his presence. He has been busy "authoring."

I did not see him on the picket lines in Boston for the Sacco-Vanzetti demonstration. John Dos Passos was there, throwing himself into things with the gallantry of a new John Reed, Dorothy Parker was there, John Howard Lawson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Katherine Anne Porter, Ruth Hale and other writers whom Mr. Dell would probably classify as "bourgeois" and "neurotic." They may be both, but they were on the picket line. The revolutionist Mr. Dell was not. And I saw his name nowhere in the papers speaking his protest against the crime that stirred the American intellectuals so profoundly. Why? Was he so busy being a dress-suit author? It is reported at Sacco-Vanzetti headquarters that he even refused the use of his name on a letter of protest. But liberals like Heywood Brown did not refuse.

A photograph of Floyd Dell recently appeared in the *N. Y.*



*Times*. He was arrayed in his authorial dress-suit, and carried a big cute baby doll on his arm, tagged "Little Accident," which is the name of his recent play. This was at some charity masquerade ball, and Mr. Dell had seized the bright opportunity for a bit of free publicity.

How shrewd and cheap. No decent person should ever be as shrewd as this. James Joyce would not do such a thing, nor Hemingway, nor Sherwood Anderson, nor Dreiser. And they do not even call themselves "revolutionists."

Floyd Dell, a few years ago, wrote two of the most distressing articles that ever made me reach for the soda-mint tablets. They appeared in the *Cosmopolitan* magazine. One was named: "I'd Rob a Bank For My Wife." It was a confession by a man who had once been a revolutionary idealist, but who now recognized that his first duty was to earn lots of money for his wife and children, and who blithely accepted the task. What a fine consolation for every bourgeois father of a family! Floyd Dell says it is moral to exploit and grind women and children in your cotton mills, so long as you need the money for your own wife and children.

The other article was titled something like this: "Once I Believed in Free Love, Now I Believe in Marriage."

This article told all the intimate facts of Floyd Dell's last adventure in free love, describing but not actually naming the unfortunate girl. Then Mr. Dell confessed all the gruesome details of his courtship of his present wife, and their marriage. Her picture appeared, and his; and their house; and babies; but I felt cheated because there was no photo of their bedroom, or popular charts illustrating the physiology of sex.

Bah! What a mess. If this is Revolution, the word has no meaning. But it is Floyd Dell, it is American literary climbing, it is bourgeois competition, it is not Revolution.

Floyd Dell should have the decency never to use this word again. He does not understand it any longer. It belongs to his dead youth. He is no more of a revolutionist today than is Elinor Glyn, and the wide world knows it. Why keep up this painful pretense? Mr. Dell should take the sound advice Walter Weyl once gave to tired radicals. Let him gracefully retire. No one will begrudge him his suburban peace. Let him go on writing cheap sex confession, and shallow novels and plays. Let him wear a dress suit, and fraternize around the tea tables with the literary racketeers. He is only treading the path of hundreds of other ex-radicals in America. No one really cares. The dead can bury their dead. But the dead should not sign their letters, "Yours for the Revolution."

MICHAEL GOLD.



...Drawn by William Gropper

**Yes, Comrade—**

## MELTING POT

*They throw them back  
To melt the lead.  
Nothing is ever  
Safely dead.  
One hour ago  
The headlines tore  
Into the eyes.  
One hour before  
The city room  
Was rustling with  
A scaffold doom.  
Now legal murder  
Bubbles white  
Squirting to tell  
An ocean flight.  
There is a stream  
Of life in lead  
That mocks the living  
And shocks the dead.*

*They throw us back  
To soft earth too—  
And O what sun  
And ice can do.*

CHARLES A. WAGNER.

## COKE TOWN

*By day she is a wanton  
Washed dirty-white thru hours  
Of nocturnal debauch;  
But at night she negligently sticks  
A garland of arclights in her hair  
And flaunts her filthy nakedness  
In loud checks of black and white.*

HENRY GEORGE WEISS.

## ON READING "THE LIFE OF THE BEE"

*"Small cells and scant food produce workers."  
"Special cells and special food produce princesses."  
How advanced we are, Brother and Sister,  
We are almost as advanced as the bees—  
Our workers starve in tiny cell-like hovels,  
While their masters idle in luxurious surroundings;  
Occasionally sending forth preachers to preach of  
abstinence,  
Submission and the dignity of Labor.*

ELLEN CAYE.



...Drawn by William Gropper

**Yes, Comrade—**

# GENERALS DIE IN BED

By CHARLES YALE HARRISON\*

One morning in the early part of August 1918, five days before the battle of Amiens, they marched our brigade over to a neighboring village and told us about the sinking of the hospital ship, *Llandovery Castle*.

It was a blazing hot day and as the brigade marched, the men kicked up the baked earth of the road into a cloud of dust. When we spat, the spittle dropped like little balls of mud.

Finally we drew up, soaked in sweat on the parade square. Our faces were red as the poppies war poets were writing about back home. Weighted with our burdensome equipment and wrapped in our hot woolen uniforms we stood rigid as fence-posts while a general from G.H.Q. read us an account of how several hundred wounded Canadian soldiers struggled in the icy waters of the English Channel when the *Llandovery Castle*, a Canadian hospital ship, was torpedoed. We were a Canadian brigade.

The white morning sun shimmered on the general's brass and equipment as he calmly told us this tale of official murder. He spoke dispassionately and in an even tone which lent weight and authenticity to his remarks.

The life-boats, we were told, were sprayed by enemy machine-gun fire as the nurses appealed in vain to the laughing Huns in the U-boat. The amputation cases, he said, went to the bottom instantly. They couldn't swim, poor chaps, he added. The salt water added to the agony of our dying comrades.

The war was nearing its end, we did not know this, of course, but our nerves were shaky and every insane rumor flew on the eager wings of fear.

The general continued.

We were going into action in a few days, he said, to avenge the lives of our murdered comrades. An enemy like the German did not merit human treatment in war. Very well, if they chose to suspend the accepted rules for conducting civilized warfare, by God, two could play at that game.

The hard faces of the brigade hardened still more as the story continued. A man shuffled uneasily here and there.

Other staff officers spoke.

History would recall, one said, that the gallant Canadians did not allow this wanton act of barbarism to go unavenged.

The battle in which we will soon be engaged, another said, will be remembered by generations still unborn as the *Battle of Llandovery Castle*. More men shuffled. A non-com spat out an order to stand still.

The brigade commander spoke next. He was liked by the men; he had risen from the ranks. He hinted that every prisoner taken in the coming battle would have to be fed from our rations.

"I'm not saying," he said, "for you not to take prisoners. That's against international rules. All I'm saying is that we'll have to feed 'em out of our rations."

Some of us laughed at this. Most of us were silent, however.

They marched us back to our billets through that cloud of dust and we spat little balls of mud when our throats choked up.

\* \* \*

A few days later we moved closer to the front. Tanks, tractors, heavy artillery rolled in a ponderous metallic stream towards the front lines. We marched by night, footsore and smelling sour of sweat, and slept like dead men during the blistering August day. In the daytime, it seemed, life was suspended. Neither man nor beast moved. All was still. The tanks and heavy guns sprawled like sleeping dinosaurs covered with camouflage tarpaulin.

Only a few birds chirped gaily as though no war was in progress. I remember that we cursed these innocent birds. In our maniac fear we thought that the chirping and twittering would give our position away. We were now within range of heavy shell-fire. We sat up, bleary-eyed and furious, and threw stones at the birds. They flew away, frightened.

At night we crawled out of our billets—deserted barns, with

gaping roofs, pig-sties, ruined sheds. We stood and swayed from the lack of sleep as the roll was called.

The next night we were told that we would go into action on the morning of the eighth. We were to take no prisoners. Men said this on all sides. It became an unofficial order.

Rumors spread. We were all to have ten days leave in Paris after the battle. This was the last battle of the war. After this—then home! We were to have the heaviest protective barrage since the beginning of the war. General Foch was personally directing this action. There were five lines of artillery on the twenty mile front standing hub to hub. Shells would explode every three seconds in every three-foot area within Heinie's lines. One man figured out that a louse couldn't live through a fire of such intensity.

The day before the battle it was hard to sleep. We talked aimlessly. What was the best way of not taking prisoners? One said a bayonet gave one the greatest personal satisfaction. Another said a hand grenade made a good clean job of it:

"You slip a bomb in his pocket when he ain't looking. You pull the pin and then say, 'Raus mit 'im, Heinie.'" He runs about twenty yards and up he goes. He just comes apart."

The sergeant said that a bayonet was a messy job. The entrenchments, he said, always stuck to the blade when you withdrew. One man screwed up his face, sickening.

"It's the suction that does it," the sergeant explained.

The lance-corporal was all for the use of a rifle.

"A rifle makes a neat job," he said. "The bullet is hot when it hits. It sterilizes as it goes through."

One of our number, a silent, brooding veteran who enlisted in 1915, told us that he saw a Canadian non-commissioned officer crucified to a barn door near Ypres.

"He had a Heinie bayonet through each hand and one through his feet. Crucified, by Christ."

The veteran had a yellow elongated face and deep hollow eyes. He looked like a man who had seen terrible things.

Our colonel, a six-foot blond Englishman, mixed freely with us and joked:

"We'll all have lots of souvenirs to-morrow, eh, men?"

\* \* \*

We were following the barrage cautiously staggering as the very earth shook with the volcanic fury of the bombardment. The enemy reply was weak. He was overwhelmed by the storm of metal which rained on his lines. The air was full of cordite smoke, the color of weak tea. It bit into the throat and parched the mouth. The flashes of the artillery zig-zagged across the early morning sky. Ears and noses bled from the force of the detonations.

Ten thousand shells shrieked over our heads on their way to the enemies' line. The earth heaved and rolled. Our lines advanced steadily behind the pale yellow screen of smoke. Monster tanks crawled ahead of us spitting flame.

Then the enemy began to emerge from the smoke. They held their hands high over their heads and ran with funny jumpy steps towards us. They opened their mouths wide as though they were shouting something of great importance. Doubtless they were asking for mercy. Hundreds of them ran towards us like desperate rats smoked out from a hole.

Then, one by one, they toppled over. It was just like target practice. We had remembered our brigade commander's words. Everything was hazy in the smoke and it was not so easy to pick them off. We kept on advancing. They were now quite close to us but only a handful was left. They huddled into a shallow shell-hole and a few of our men went to the lip of the hole and shot into it. In a few moments only a squirming mass was left. A few moved their lips but we could not hear what they said for the din of the artillery.

By noon we had advanced five miles into the enemy's territory.



Our colonel told us we had gained our objective. The sinking of the hospital ship, *Llandoverly Castle*, had been avenged.

\* \* \*

Four months later in a London hospital I read in the *Daily Mail* that the *Llandoverly Castle* had not been a hospital ship. She was carrying war supplies.

\* \* \*

## II.

It is now eleven years after the war. I have not forgotten that August day. I have just finished reading Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in War-Time*.<sup>\*</sup> Ponsonby does not mention the sinking of the *Llandoverly Castle* and its terrible sequel under the pall of cordite smoke a few miles out of Amiens. Nevertheless, it is an excellent document on how the makers of war manufactured their atrocity stories which whipped up war frenzy and drove millions of young men into battle lusting for each other's blood. What we saw that morning in August must have been repeated many times on hundreds of fronts in all parts of Europe.

All the lies which inflamed the most hideous of passions in 1914-1918 are exposed in this admirable book. They are all here—the mutilated nurse, the Belgian baby without hands, the baby of Courbeck Loo, the crucified Canadian, the corpse factory for rendering the fat of human bodies, the German U-boat atrocities and many others.

In each case Mr. Ponsonby traces the lie to its source and shows the method of its manufacture.

The following story is quoted because it clearly illustrates how these stories, many of them harmless were deliberately twisted until they became "atrocity" yarns.

"When the fall of Antwerp got known, the church bells were rung (meaning in Germany)."

*Koelnische Zeitung (Cologne)*

<sup>\*</sup>Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., \$2.



Drawn by A. L. Refregier

**REVOLT**

"According to the *Koelnische Zeitung*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring church bells when the fortress was taken."

*Le Matin (Paris)*

"According to what *Le Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken, have been driven away from their places."

*The Times (London)*

"According to what *The Times* has heard from Cologne via Paris the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken, have been sentenced to hard labor."

*Corriere della Sera (Italy)*

"According to information to the *Corriere della Sera* from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down."

*Le Matin (Paris)*

A brief paragraph in the book explains why ships like the *Llandoverly Castle* were sunk:

"The constant assertion that on no occasion were hospital ships used for the carrying of any war material or soldiers was contrary to fact."

*Falsehood in War-Time* is a slim volume, 192 pages, but in it is packed the whole callous story of how the war-mongers played upon every emotional cord in the human breast so that men went eagerly to plunge bayonets into each other's entrails.

It is a hopeless wish, I know, but I should like to see this book read by the millions of the rising generation, potential cannon-fodder, who are blithely marching into the horrors of another world war.

## BAWL, KID!

Welcome to the world, kid!  
Open your mouth and bawl!  
It's a dirty trick on you,  
bringing you to birth in 1929 Hooverland.  
But if you asked us if we'd wanted you,  
we wouldn't lie.  
Tighten those rosebud fists and bawl louder!  
You've got more sense than most grown-ups!  
you want food and you won't be quiet till you get it.  
Your big eyes ask, "Who are you anyway?"  
Your father—the fellow you've got to defy and overcome—  
a wage-slave today and  
tomorrow daisies and cabbages will sprout out of me  
as well as the next one.  
I don't want you to be loyal to me;  
I expect better of you.  
I don't want you to be loyal to this country,  
it's not your fault you were born here.  
I didn't pick it. Columbus discovered it, then died in the goofy-  
house.  
Bawl loud, then suck long and grow up  
to know one thing:  
**YOU'RE A WORKER.**  
These little fingers soft as the fronds of a fern  
must grow hard to grab an axe, pick, spade.  
Learn to love the feel and meaning  
of the Hammer and Sickle.  
Never trust anyone wholly whose hands are soft.  
In your dimpled hands and those of millions of other  
working-class babies—white, black, yellow—  
the future of the world rests.  
Open your little mouth and bawl!  
Clench those rosebud fists!  
Suck hard so they'll grow strong  
to smash the old world in which you were born.

—RALPH CHEYNEY.



*Drawn by A. L. Refregier*

# **REVOLT**



*Drawn by A. L. Refregier*

# **REVOLT**



# THE SOCIAL THEATRE

By ERWIN PISCATOR

Translated by Anna Rochester

EDITORIAL NOTE:—In view of the closing of the New Playwrights' Theatre in New York, this article by Piscator written for *Monde* of Paris, assumes a special interest for New Masses readers. Piscator, as a revolutionary stage director, has been a sensation in Berlin for over two years. And yet his theatre failed even though Berlin has a tremendous revolutionary audience for reasons which he confesses here. The New Playwrights' Theatre failed for exactly the same reason, as Piscator's theatre. All social and artistic problems have become international today; there are no exceptions in any country. Piscator's article might well have been written by one of the directors of the New Playwrights. His solution has been to found a completely workers' theatre in a workers' neighborhood. But this is not yet possible in New York, and may not be for some time.

Our theatre was born out of the conflict over a play by Welk, *Storm over Gottland* (*Gewitter uber Gottland*). The battle was drawn between two groups, lined up under their respective slogans: the one, "art as an expression of human greatness"; the other, "art as an instrument of social conflict." A difference which for several years had been quietly growing sharper had arrived at the point of open crisis. A considerable part of the function of the Piscator theatre was to bring it to a focus.

It was an odd situation. In the very midst of the bourgeoisie, hailed as the fashion of the moment, financed by capital and recognized by the state, was born a theatre whose program was social revolution. For the first time in the history of the theatre, the vast and complex stage apparatus was to serve for the presentation of a world idea and the fighting will of the oppressed class.

Did our theatre have a public which agreed with this intellectual approach? Only sixteen thousand persons from the great army of the proletariat were able to give their support to the project for one season. By that very fact, our theatre was obliged—under the material conditions of capitalism—to offer its productions to the various groups of the bourgeoisie who did not understand or were hostile to its ideas. They consented to pay the high prices which I was obliged to demand only because my name had a sensational value. And that helped to support my theatre financially.

This was obviously a great drawback for us, but it should be recognized that the situation drove us to it. If instead of sixteen thousand, five times that number of proletarians had rallied around us, the project would not have been confronted with the painful alternatives of perishing or competing for the public which supports bourgeois plays.

The structure of the bourgeois stage which we had at our command was inadequate for expressing the essence of a revolutionary theatre. The very form of the bourgeois stage is tumbling in ruins. Each of my productions has shown that it was not a "stage" play but a work moving toward the annihilation of a theatre form created by bourgeois society. Further, the dramatic idea developed and understood by the bourgeois order is also decaying. The revision of plays with which I have so often been charged was not due to any sadistic impulse toward the authors but to the necessity of exploring in the plays the social, economic and political aspects of the psychological questions which they raised.

Our purpose was clearly defined, but the methods were still experimental and scarcely any tangible results had been achieved when the Piscator theatre set to work. We knew very well that we must make a basically different use of the theatre from that which was current; but even assuming that we had our new concept of dramatic art, we still had no "new" plays and, above all, we lacked the necessary technique for setting up a new and revolutionary form entirely distinct from the forms of the bourgeois theatre.

These two basic deficiencies—the lack of a new stage architecture and a new kind of play—became the starting points for the real work of our theatre, in stage production and in the making of plays.

The stage was used in four different ways in my four productions, *Hoppla*, *Rasputin*, *Schweik* and *Konjunktur*. These settings were not born "of technical phantasy, searching idly for ever fresh sensations." They were guided—however strange it may seem—by the historic materialism of Karl Marx. They were

Marxian productions. Both the transparent, luminous, many-storeyed stage of *Hoppla* and the sphere of *Rasputin* were used for the purpose of setting each of the different scenes in immediate relation with the actual happenings in human society and thus lifting them toward the level of history. The technical enrichment of the stage by an independent scaffolding outside of the usual area of the puppet-show stage and, as in *Rasputin*, extending out even into the body of the theatre was rather incidental, even accidental.

Not less important was the construction of the stage in *Schweik* and in *Konjunktur*. In each, an underlying principle of force was very precisely expressed by the moving carpet or the revolving stage or by the dramatic and dynamic constructivism.

The principle guiding our revision of plays expresses a similar approach. Since we were concerned with the condition of the class out of which this theatre had been born, we no longer wished to center the action in the personal fate of one individual, with his inner conflicts, moral and psychological. For the very function of the individual has changed: the social element in his existence should take precedence. When he steps on to the stage he brings with him his class or his whole social environment. If he is torn by conflict—whether psychological, moral, or merely physical this conflict is social. An era preoccupied with the relationships of human society and the revolutionary change of all social conditions, can only regard the individual as a social and political entity. This predominance of the social and political may tend toward caricature, but for this we are not responsible. It is inevitable when the conflicts within the present human situation are giving a political significance to every aspect of life.

But the individual not only reflects his class, he is also one factor in its historic development. Not the absorbing destiny of one person alone but a course of events valid for a class, for an epoch, is the foundation of the new dramatic art. Therefore the imaginary plot gives place to the document as the positive element, decisive and inescapable.

Besides these contributions to the shaping of a new revolutionary dramatic art, we have also to our credit the unquestioned fact that our stage has had direct political value. The critics could not long rest content with esthetic appraisals. They were obliged to take sides politically. This was exactly what we wanted.

In the face of these results which may be important in the history of the theatre, even important politically, and which were achieved in the midst of tremendous difficulties both human and material, one may fairly say that the failure of our enterprise is relatively unimportant. I do not intend to lay the blame on such external circumstances as rental, shifting of public interest, etc. . . . I admit without wasting words that I and my collaborators made mistakes. But one can say that quite apart from the mistakes for which the Piscator theatre itself was responsible, the project failed because the objective historic situation had not yet ripened. Perhaps we began too noisily and cut off all possibility of political or artistic compromise once we were under way. The bourgeoisie who had voluntarily endorsed the sensational nature of the project could not hold out against the steadily increasing pressure from their own journals. On the other hand, the class which really should have constituted the economic support of my theatre—I mean the working class—was not yet apparently strong enough to do this.

Our present theatre is on a healthier basis. I am glad of this, for it shows that we were on the right track. Our future work will be clear of the sensational atmosphere. I have not the slightest desire for the sensational. I wish to do thorough and solid work. Results may not appear today or even tomorrow, but I want a theatre which educates and, for this, it must be in living touch with the masses.

A revolutionary theatre without its most living element, the revolutionary public, is a contradiction which has no meaning.



NEW YORK

Woodcut by Gan Kolski

# BOOKS

Will Herberg  
Bennett Stevens  
Henry Flury

## REVIEWED BY:

Michael Gold  
E. Merrill Root

Bernard Smith  
Stanley Burnshaw  
Sol Auerbach

*Henry the Eighth*, by Francis Hackett. Horace Liveright. \$3.00.

The story of Henry VIII, the notorious English monarch, offers a splendid opportunity to the historian or biographer who is able to grasp it. Here is a king whose "amorousness" (as he himself would have called it) had a profound effect on the course of history—led to the destruction of the power of the Pope in the English realm and to the establishment of the Anglican Church. Such is the appearance! And the reality? Every schoolboy nowadays knows that these events were the culmination of century-old historic processes, closely associated with the profound economic, social and political changes that were transforming the face of Europe. The biographer of Henry VIII should consider it as his underlying task to forge the link between the appearance and the reality, to explain the transformation of the objective into the subjective, to illustrate by means of his concrete material the essential role of the individual in history, the effective reciprocal relation between the "man" and the "course of events."

Mr. Hackett has made no attempt to take advantage of the great opportunity. Even if we do not take seriously the astonishing remark that: "Anne Boleyn's refusal to accept the role of Henry's mistress unconditionally changed the course of English history." (p. 167).—If we did the book would hardly be worth noticing!—yet it cannot be denied that nowhere in this book is any real attempt made to provide any adequate explanation for the actions of Henry VIII or to show their true relations with the historical forces of which they were the expression. True; there are some gestures here and there as connecting up the royal conduct of the English king with certain events in the contemporary high-politics of the continent but precisely these vain gestures expose the essential emptiness of Mr. Hackett's historical perspective. In general the correlations offered us are formal, trivial and superficial—and uniformly unconvincing. The chapter supplying the historical introduction (the last chapter—"The Background") is precisely the kind you would expect of one who has the temerity to maintain—with a straight face—that Anne Boleyn's obstinacy changed the course of events in English history!

It never seems to occur to Mr. Hackett that the tremendous economic developments, the profound realignments of classes and class relations taking place in the world in which Henry found himself just possibly might have had something to do with his actions and conduct, might perhaps even help explain the marvellous historical effectiveness of Anne Boleyn's obstinacy. After all there have been obstinate women before who have not changed the course of history—there have even been amorous kings with unattractive wives and pretty mistresses and yet no Church schisms have taken place. Really something more is needed. But Mr. Hackett gives us nothing more. Picture to yourself a biographer of a Tudor monarch who never so much as mentions the break-up of the feudal economy, the enclosure movement, the creation of a "vagabond proletariat," the social role of merchant capitalism! Picture to yourself a biographer of Henry VIII, the "founder of the Anglican Church," who ignores entirely Lollardism and Wyckliffe, the exploiting role of the Church and the Papacy and the age-old antagonism between the hierarchy and the masses, the expropriation of the clerical possessions and the "nationalization" of the Church! Picture to yourself the biographer of Henry VIII, the autocrat, who has nothing to say of the War of the Roses, of the creation of a new "modernized" nobility, of the rise of merchant capital as the solid

foundation of the Tudor monarchy. Picture to yourself a biographer who, in this day and age, devotes countless pages to insipid trivialities or to spectacular machinations of monarchs, "forgetting" entirely that after all there actually were human beings in existence neither of the nobility nor of the higher clergy who might collectively exercise some influence upon the course of history and upon the lives of historical personages! Does Mr. Hackett think that on such a basis and with such an outlook it is possible to attain to any real understanding of the life and relations of Henry VIII, however extensive the scholarship or acute the psychological insight?

A serious biographer of Henry, King of England, would base his work upon a brief but incisive examination of the multiform phenomena that accompanied the decay of the feudal economy and the rise of capitalism. He would analyze the forms and manifestations of merchant capital, then slowly assuming a dominant role in European economy, as well as the beginnings of capitalism in agriculture—in fact all of those delightful phenomena that plunged Merrie England in one generation from its "golden age" into its "iron age." He would trace the social consequences of these changes, the emergence of new classes and the decline and disappearance of old ones from the stage of history.

Against such a background—which would require no more space than Mr. Hackett devotes to his trivialities—the story of Henry VIII would acquire sense and meaning. It would then be possible to understand how the man who could cow Convocation and Parliament apparently could not move the obstinacy of Anne Boleyn, how the man who declared to Thomas More: "We (the king) are so much bounded to the See of Rome that we cannot do too much honor to it; whatsoever impediment be to the contrary we will assert the authority of the Pope to the uttermost, for we received from the See of Rome our crown imperial!" could later behead the same More for his refusal to accede to the supremacy of the king in ecclesiastical matters, how the arbitrary tyrant who berated Parliament as if they were a pack of dogs and destroyed his friends and foes alike with despotic fitfulness was at the same time without standing army and entirely dependent upon the merchants in the first place and the peasantry afterwards. In fact it might then be possible to cast light upon the huge paradox that was Henry VIII. For Henry VIII was the expression of his age which was quick with the paradox and contradiction of life.

As it is, Mr. Hackett's story—in spite of its many good points—is futile, empty. Why should we be particularly interested in the worries and intrigues of Henry Tudor—any more than in those of John Smith? The personal drama of Henry is not shown in its relation to the great impersonal drama of the age. And so we see the marionettes, sometimes the strings—but never the guiding hands behind the stage.

Yet *Henry the Eighth* has its good points. It is a stirring and stately pageant well worth watching if you are not too curious as to what it all means. It is well written altho it appears to me that here and there creeps in a note of affectation and artificiality. The whole story of Kathryn Howard (Henry's fourth wife) an astonishingly modern flapper who met her death with a courageous avowal of her true love: "I die a Queen, but I would rather die the wife of Culpepper!" is told with a beauty and touching quality that cannot be forgotten.

WILL HERBERG.



## DRUNK WITH SUNLIGHT

*Banjo*, by Claude McKay. Harpers. \$2.50.

Claude McKay will always remain a tropical poet, a man drunk with sunlight, who loves the natural world with the passion of a wild goat, and resents humanity's touch.

His latest novel, *Banjo*, is the story of a group of Negro beachcombers in Marseilles. It is a beautiful and humorous piece of reporting. Anyone who has ever been "on the beach" with a gang of congenial bums will feel homesick in reading this book.

Even a comfortable bourgeois will envy McKay's friends the wine they steal, the food they beg, the waterfront women they live with. One can buy all these things with money, but one cannot buy the primitive delight of hunting them afresh each day.

(But the price of this joy is that one must not think about the future, one must not mind bad smells, and one must be willing to take a chance.)

In McKay's mind these Negro beachcombers in a foreign port become a kind of symbol of Negro joy. This is a false note. I can testify that white beachcombers enjoy themselves in about the same manner and with the same gusto as the blacks. I once spent five months on the beach in Tampico, and had about the same kind of time as Banjo and his friends.

It is one of the pitfalls of racial patriotism, this straining to prove that Negroes have cornered all the joy, or that Jews have all the brains, or Irishmen all the soul, or Americans all the organizing ability in the world.

The human animal is about the same mess of foolishness whatever his color or race. McKay's gang are a delightful bunch, however; and he writes of them with a lush, gorgeous humor that reminds one of no one less than Shakespeare.

I kept thinking of Falstaff as I read the dialogue in *Banjo*. It is the richest, freshest and most living dialogue anyone is writing today. It is real talk, and it is real poetry. After all the arid moderns, this book tastes like a ripe mango.

The pressure upon Negro writers by the leaders of their own race is to write only of the educated fringe. Any writer like McKay who goes to the proletarians for his themes is regarded as a kind of Judas.

Claude McKay refuses to be turned into a parlor writer by the ritzy Negro intellectuals. He has had too fervent a contact with life to aspire toward becoming a black Villard. He knows that the Negro workers are the folk, the race, the Negro reality; and that what they think and feel and do is much more important than a hundred fashionable weddings like that of Dr. Dubois' daughter.

Claude McKay used to be a member of the Communist Party but there are no hints of revolutionary feeling in his novels. What he has done, however, is to describe Negro workers and migratories with the truthfulness and intimate sympathy of a proletarian writer. He is one of these workers; that is the feeling you get from his books. He is not a mere observer, an intellectual.

Claude McKay has let his Negro patriotism swell too huge. This kind of bitterness is sure to blind one to reality in the end. There are several places in *Banjo* where McKay's anti-white prejudices make him write as foolishly as a Southern Negro-hater.

I don't blame him, of course; I have often marvelled at the way Negroes remain kindly and friendly in the face of such constant persecution. I used to go around with McKay in New York, and we were always being thrown out of restaurants. Once, for race reasons, we were thrown out of a chop suey house by an indignant Chinese!

Claude McKay and I were co-editors for two years of the *Liberator*. He was a strange, proud and unusual person, and we were always fighting each other. He fought with all his friends, white and black, and as I look back at that time, it was a good trait in him, for thus he saved himself from the flabbiness of so many of the Negro intellectuals. He has learned to write prose like a master, but is still feeling his way in the matter of themes. I hope he comes through the stage of animalism and mere storytelling, and uses those proletarian Negro themes that he is best equipped to express among all Americans.

MICHAEL GOLD.



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## The Iron Dinosaur

*The Wheel Age*, by Stanley Burnshaw. The Folio Press. \$1.50. Distributor, Stanley Burnshaw, 47c Washington Sq. So., New York City.

The Machine Age is a Niagara of cogwheels: whether we affirm or whether we deny this Age of Machines, we must admit that it is a cataract of iron—huge, roaring, terrible, magnificent. The sky-scrapers are splendid surges of iron foam, the cross-currents of traffic are the onrush of metal waves, the mills and foundaries are whirl-pools of white-hot spray . . . Carlyle said that Capitalism was "shooting Niagara," and today we need only add, "A Niagara of wheels."

More terrible than anything else about the Machine Age, and not at all magnificent (as the Machine Age, in many of its aspects, is), we must admit that psychologically we face the machine with a bewildered dualism which even the *New Masses* cannot escape. Shall we be intoxicated, shall we be intimidated, by the Machine? Is the Machine Atlas—or Frankenstein? Shall we chant (with Sandburg or the future's greater poets) a Gloria in Excelsis to hog-butcherers for a nation . . . and to better things; or shall we in our hearts whisper a De Profundis? Even the *New Masses*, which hymns the Strenuous Machine, also shows coal-miners drearily filing into dreary pits and asking: "What good that the sun shines?" And our bewildered dualism is, largely, the reason why (as yet) the 20th Century pronounces, in a very loud voice, very inarticulate words.

In this situation, all finely-sincere, deeply-lived comment, such as this book, is beneficial. Here in words crystal-clear and hauntingly rhythmic, strangely mingling the logical clarity of the French mind with a moving, somewhat melancholy, yet life-trusting poetry, Burnshaw presents our *Wheel Age*. With psychological accuracy, he lays his pencil exactly upon the fallacy of the age: its lack of contact with living earth—the good green earth whence the corn grows, the deeper earth of the sub-conscious whence poetry grows. Its difficulty is (he rightly finds) that it satisfies only part of man's being—that it is out of touch with the deeps and the demons, the passions and the powers, the intuitions and the vital energies of man. Then, having presented the central fallacy, he turns to his—I fear!—less potent solution. Human Nature, as the *Wheel Age* rolls on, recognizes what is wrong, scraps the machine, and returns to "Dance, and Provencal song, and sun-burnt mirth"—which he calls The Pastoral Age. Personally, I fear that our poor simple Eve, Humanity, having tasted of machinery, will not return to idyllic Eden so easily, nor do I see how, given modern populations and needs, life (not to speak of leisure) can be pastorally maintained. I wish, myself, neither to join my sans-culotte friends who tell the tumbrils to roar bearing machines to the guillotine . . . nor yet my Bourbon friends who chant, "Machines can do no wrong! Long live Machines!" I would not destroy, but tame, machines—believing neither in the God from the Machine, nor yet in the Devil from the Machine, but using machines as servants of Life. Burnshaw, however, has shown beautifully the problem and need; and only as man can build upon machinery a life spontaneous, unstandardized, vital—a life of the splendors and the powers—will man, or machines, eventually survive.

Meanwhile, the *Wheel Age* is a fine, unique, prose poem. He who has eyes—let him read!

E. MERRILL ROOT.

## Subjective Reactions

*Five Poets*; Edith Mirick, Norman McLeod, Benjamin Musser, Jewel Miller, Isobel Stone. Henry Harrison. \$2.25.

An interesting collection of subjective reactions showing vitality, color, iconoclasm. The symposium is of uneven merit. Those of the first author mentioned, Edith Mirick, undoubtedly deserve first place. She shows great promise and with closer contact with the labor movement will evolve for she has force as well as beauty. A little closer scrutiny and a few more omissions would strengthen it.

HENRY FLURY.



Drawn by William Siegel

## Stories from Soviet Courts

*The Curious Lottery*, by Walter Duranty. Coward McCann. \$2.50.

In his aloof and subtle manner Duranty reports the Soviet Union for the *New York Times*. He ranks among the best of foreign correspondents reporting for the capitalist press. He plays the "human angle," is above it all, as reporters are told to be, and likes to give the impression that he is comfortably out of the Soviet scene. When he does take a position he changes his aspect like a porcupine. His is as bourgeois a mind as one could find.

Trials, however, no matter from what angle they are reported or collected, can to some extent be characteristic of the social philosophy behind Soviet justice. In this collection of short stories the forceful social philosophy of the Soviets thrusts itself round the corner of Duranty's "human angle" and appears from under his journalistic aloofness. The final sentences of the Soviet court bring you face to face with workingclass justice. In three of Duranty's cases peasants were not finally sentenced because of their acts,—acts which would be considered crimes in a capitalist court—but because they were superstitious. Danchenko is sentenced to eight years in prison, not because he murdered his wife but because, the court decree ran, he "held a position of trust under the Soviet Government where it was his duty to give an example of new and free revolutionary life to the backward peasant masses. To this trust he has been false, showing proof of a degraded and obsolete superstition." The Red Army soldier is commended for having done honor to the Red Army by beating the village Khaldoon who refused to marry him for killing his pig, the peasant woman was sentenced for killing her husband because she believed in salvaging his soul and was therefore not fit to bring up her children.

Almost half of the book is given to the Shakhta trial, the trial which, because of its extraordinary significance and its profound effect upon the Soviet masses, offers splendid opportunities for one really concerned with Soviet justice. Shakhta, Duranty confesses, was so many shadows to him. He buries it in the much more insignificant aspects of the "human tragedy" of the spies and saboteurs. He was quite overcome by the suffering of the 53 Donetsk conspirators and remains quite untouched by the seriousness of their crime to Soviet society and by the violence they planned against the construction of socialism—a goal for which a whole nation was striving with the active support of masses throughout the world. That is Duranty, however, a bourgeois sympathizing with his own elements when two classes clash.

SOL AUERBACH.

# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by William Siegel*



## Sex and Society

*Sex in Civilization*, edited by V. F. Calverton & Samuel D. Schmalhausen, Macaulay, \$5.

It is difficult to conceive of a symposium that could cover its field more thoroughly than *Sex in Civilization* does. The thirty two contributions to the volume exhaust practically every phase of sex and its manifestations in human conduct. Certainly few of the chapters pretend to discuss technical details, and it is equally true that most of the chapters are little more than outlines of their subjects. But this is its specific virtue. Those who are interested in the various problems treated in the symposium will find the articles to be excellent guides for further study. Those whose curiosity does not extend beyond an outline, will at least absorb a little accurate information from a reliable source.

I do not want to give the impression that all the contributions are equal in quality. But I believe it can safely be said that not one is valueless. Even the extremely narrow and platitudinous article by Professor McDougall is interesting, if only as the expression of a conservative academician. Arthur Davison Ficke's essay on sex in poetry offers nothing new and contains nothing that needs elaborate comment, but it is not without a journalistic charm. Coolly considered, Dr. Schmalhausen's article, "The Sexual Revolution" is a windy violent blast, badly written, packed with psychoanalytic nonsense. It is unquestionably inferior to much of his previous work, although it too has something to say. For once Dr. Schmalhausen's voice seems to be pitched a bit too high. That is the result of whipping himself into a state of unwarranted excitement. However, his excellent editing of the symposium, with V. F. Calverton, is an adequate compensation for his rather inadequate essay.

Among the more important chapters are those by Robert Briffault, William Fielding, Harry Elmer Barnes, Abraham Myerson and Mr. Calverton. Briffault's discussion of sex in religion is an amazing compression of an enormous wealth of material into twenty pages. It is impossible, of course, to deal thoroughly with so rich a problem in such limited space, but I do not think anyone can go further in the effort than Briffault has done. Professor Barnes writes on sex in education, a chapter which should be read by our so-called "educators". It is a forceful, indignant challenge to the hypocrisy of American schools. Dr. Fielding's delineation of the art of love needs no comment. It will probably be read by every libidinous adolescent who can get hold of the book but it is none the less a calm, dispassionate analysis of the necessity for amorous technique. Dr. Myerson is the author of one of the outstanding contributions to the symposium. His criticism of Freud's theory of sex is logical, scientific, and has the added advantage of being good journalism. Calverton's article, "Sex and Social Struggle", shows sound scholarship and patient examination of historical phenomena. He is pre-eminently concerned with social problems, his attitude toward sex problems being therefore endowed with a broader, more humane, and more intelligent spirit than is manifested by many of his fellow-writers. In a symposium of this nature it is peculiarly fitting that an essay like Calverton's should be included, for to the chance lay reader it's a reminder that the individual complex is but a unit in a communal complex, and that the individual neurosis is cured by purging society of its neurosis.

It is the latter truth, furthermore, which gives the symposium more than a local interest. We are becoming increasingly aware today of the fact that our former conceptions of sex were wholly incorrect, and this includes even the conceptions of our advanced "liberals." It goes without saying that the puritan, ascetic or procreative philosophy was injurious and false—a philosophy which condemned sex to be spoken of only in whispers, if at all. But it is also true that the exuberant, impatient insistent arguments and debates on sexual matters that have recently characterized certain "emancipators" and "free-minded" circles tend to the other extreme. They over-emphasize and exaggerate the immediate importance of a factor in human life which should be accepted as naturally and as simply as eating a delicious meal.

In so far as *Sex in Civilization* uncovers the network of human associations which debase, exalt, reject or accept sex, it furthers the understanding of a rather significant problem. The book is a notable addition to a rapidly growing library on the subject.

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## Vanishing Gentlemen

*Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, by Siegfried Sassoon. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

'Memoirs of a by-gone age' this book might have been called; for truly it recalls days that have passed forever from old England—an age wiped out by the great war.

Siegfried Sassoon wrote in bitterness and disillusion a book of war poems which gave a jolt to the literary world back in 1919. He has had two other books of poetry since then, but *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* is his first book of prose.

It is not really a novel; it is actually 'memoirs', written in very beautiful English, with a quiet charm that sets it apart among the books of real literary worth. It reveals a Sassoon still disillusioned, but not bitter; for he writes of a time when he was peacefully ignorant of any of the world's problems and happily occupied with the diversions of an English country gentleman. It was certainly a pleasant life for those who belonged to it.

Looking back at this life now, Sassoon sees—and subtly indicates—the blindness of this leisure class group to anything but its own convenience and pleasure. Nothing could surpass their snobbishness towards servants and the members of the lower middle class. Some of them had heard vaguely of socialists; but the only thing really known about them was that they were disgusting people who objected to hunts and big unproductive estates. The great railway strike—with thousands of workers starving—concerned the fox-hunters only because there were no trains running for a while and it was impossible to transport the horses for the chase. This group living on unearned incomes derived from mills and mines and colonies, had a delightful, care-free life—until suddenly the war broke.

Sassoon's fox-hunting man goes along to war with everyone else, and the book leaves him in France. We who know what happened to the old estates, the old fortunes, the old-time country life of England during and after the war, know that the fox-hunting man's world was dealt a death blow. True we hear now that the Prince of Wales still attends point-to-point races, still tumbles off his horse at regular intervals. But we also hear that he takes time once in a while to visit the miners and pat them on the head. He and his fellow-hunters no longer ignore strikers: they try to placate them. They no longer go peacefully on their way unaware of socialists. They find them a disturbing element in every community. The unemployed no longer starve quietly in their homes; they march upon London and make demands.

The good old days are gone, quite gone. Sassoon realizes it and looks back regretfully. Apparently while he has found disillusionment he has not yet found hope.

H. B.

## Male Supremacy

*Understanding Women*, by K. A. Wieth-Knudsen. Translated from the Danish by Arthur G. Chater. Foreword by Ernest Boyd. Elliot Holt. \$3.00.

Here we have a querulous, ultra-reactionary, calamity-howling Danish professor whining that there is something rotten in the State of Denmark. Why? *Cherchez le femme!* For western man, contrary to the oriental, has conjured up an image of woman utterly different from reality and has given her status. The result has been that feminism, "the insidious invention of Jews," is by means of "venomous and low-minded agitation" about to "stifle man's intellectual qualities, psychical and moral strength—in short to destroy the whole of our civilization, nothing less." This "feminist movement," by which term the author damns every demand for women's emancipation, is "consciously being used by the Communists . . . as a wedge for the destruction of the white man's world." The author accuses "feminism" of making women impotent on one page of the book and on the next page declares that it increase licentiousness and prostitution; it obliterates "all the noblest and most vitalizing instincts of our race." *Ad nauseum* . . .

The book is in the same class as the pseudo-scientific ravings of those who would perpetuate a supposed Nordic supremacy; one

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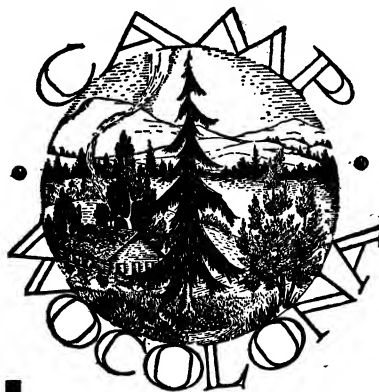
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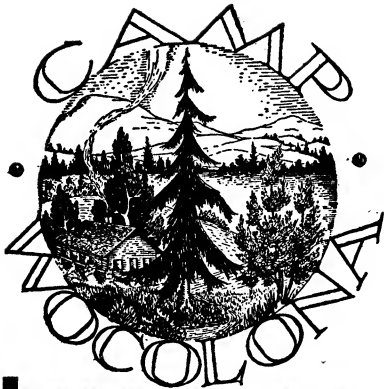
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who sees man's dominance challenged by the rising tide of women assails women with insane passion and with the same mendacity as his confreres scream against the "yellow peril." The psychological and anthropological data with which he buttresses his arguments, to give his prejudices on women's "innate inferiority" the appearance of scientific dicta, are either antiquated or distorted, when not definitely perverted.

Ernest Boyd contributes a foreword which reveals intellectual incompetence. Its closing sentence illustrates the vapidness of its content: "It (the book) should be on the shelf of every club in America; it will bring light and guidance into every home."

BENNETT STEVENS.

## Poetic Suicide

*Angels and Earthly Creatures*, by Elinor Wylie. A. A. Knopf. \$2.50

With this last volume Elinor Wylie completes her line of devolution as a poet. In *Nets to Catch the Wind*, her first book, we could distinguish against the Browning-Metaphysical background, a few original, authentic poems. *Black Armour*, which followed, showed a dilution of the original idiom: the authentic passages stood out less clearly against the beloved background. *Trivial Breath*, the next, marked a further degeneration of originality and in *Angels and Earthly Creatures* there is no Elinor Wylie at all: she seems to wilfully have merged and effaced herself in the beloved seventeenth century poets, who were to her the highest poetic good.

There can be little doubt but that this course was intentional. Careful examination and comparison show unquestionably that she literally uses the vocabulary, the poetic figures, the metrics, even the ideas of the metaphysicals; most obviously, John Donne's. *Angels and Earthly Creatures* is not much more than an exercise-book in seventeenth century poets; Marvel, Crashaw, Donne, etc.! And there is nothing unusual in this from the human viewpoint.

However, inaccuracies and delusions arise when critics fail to recognize the truths of this very particular case. And they build up an entire fabric of fallacies when they fail to discern that *Angels and Earthly Creatures* is intentionally derivative, imitative, and consequently worthless as original poetry. One critic (in the *Saturday Review*) even commended her for using so much of Shakespeare and Donne. Undoubtedly her stunning personality is the root of this misplaced hyperbolism by her critics, and the grief at her strange passing as well. The humaneness of the critical attitude is therefore understandable, but the cold light of truth can take no cognizance of these very personal circumstances of the book. Elinor Wylie's poetic history must remain a gradual, wilful annihilation of the poetic self; and instead of this last book being her highest poetic achievement, it is the pitiful record of her self-burial in the sources she loved.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

*Farmer Have You A Daughter Fair?* by Mike Wallach, Vanguard Press. \$2.50.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## Be Constructive

Dear Friends:

I am enclosing stamps for another copy of the Dec. 1928 issue. I lent mine to a friend who evidently liked it too much to return it. I particularly want the issue for the poem *God Is A Steel Mill* which seemed to me one of the finest things that has appeared in a stimulating magazine. I feel that better for the workers' movement than politics or the kind of bitter fragments that the *New Masses* too often prints, is this kind of shaping into a full art form of a fundamental struggle. I know that this is the theory which seems to have produced the wan intelligence of *transition*, but that group of exiles lacks the vigor and foothold which should give the Art of the *New Masses* a powerful cultural leverage in America.

Particularly good to my mind are Martin Russak's silk-weaver's sketches and some of the finer black and whites. I mustn't forget my appreciation of Tina Modotti's photographs—that was stunning of the hands crossed on a spade handle in the December issue—and the one in June of the Mexican woman picketing. Then I like Louis Lozowick's lithographs of machinery.

With my very best wishes for a second year even more constructive than the first,  
EDITH HEERMANCE.

Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

## Give Us Poems for Workers

Comrades:

I have a criticism to make. The prose of the *New Masses* seems far away and ahead—revolutionarily speaking—of its poetry. Such poems as *Oswald The Bald*, the ones written by Herman Spector and other vers librists, are extremely clever, display in lots of cases masterly technique of that form of expression; but it is—you must admit—highly sophisticated verse, in fact depending for its appeal on an understanding of such art-forms. Such understanding the average working stiff does not possess, nor, everything considered, can be expected to possess at this stage of the game. There is, of course, a group of intellectual workers in this country to whom such verse appeals, but the group is small, and will remain small for years to come. The tradition established by Joe Hill—and in smaller measure by Ralph Chaplin—still holds good. Yet in reviewing Joe Hill and his art in one issue of *New Masses*, Chaplin, when it came to quoting from Hill, selected the lines of a song not at all typical of Joe's works as a whole. *Pie In The Sky*, *Scissorbill*, *Cashey Jones*, these are the songs that swayed, and still sway, thousands of workers. And in relation to Chaplin himself, he is famous with hundreds of workers whom I met, not for *Bars and Shadows*, for his inimitable sonnets, but for the ballads and satires first published in *When The Leaves Come Out*, and of course, for

his martial class songs. In the *Poems For Workers*, Gomez edited a splendid little, soul-stirring volume, but is the *New Masses* printing such poetry? It is not. Remember, I am not advocating that free verse, the modern trend of poetry, be ignored; but I am pleading for the inclusion of other sorts of poetic forms on a fifty-fifty basis. Perhaps—who knows—by such inclusion you may attract the more illiterate working stiff with poems he understands at a glance, and thus lead him by degrees to try and understand the more subtle medium of *vers libre*. I have experimented with your verse on various ones of my fellow workers, and the consensus of opinion seems to be that your poetry "don't mean anything." There is a love for poetry deep in the heart of the average working man, but let me be frank and say you are not going the right way about awakening it.

HENRY GEORGE WEISS.

Tucson, Arizona

## All for the Artists

Dear New Masses:

I like your magazine but sometimes it's damned puerile . . . some of the authors may be valiant enough rebels, but they are damned poor writers . . . the artists are magnificent. Mike's stuff and Paul Peters things are the only bits worth while . . . but keep it up—the sheet is the only live consciously rebel thing in this pot-bellied land today. Luck . . .

ROBERT S. ALLEN.

Washington, D. C.

## Don't Become a Success

Dear Comrades:

I like your magazine and I like Mike Gold's articles. Here's hoping he never becomes a financial success like Floyd Dell. Did you notice the latter's picture in the rotogravure section of the Sunday *Times*, pictured in costume at one those "who's who" affairs?

Keep up the good work.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

MAX MANGEL.

## Reflections in a Sanatorium

New room-mate's been coughing all night. Wish to hell they move him out. Ought to be given a double dose of cough medicine or codine . . . or poison . . .

Mountains look pretty today. Like to be up on Baldy cooling my fever off in the snow. Snow on the mountains and orange groves in the valley—beautiful scenery. Nice location sanatorium has.

Sanatorium. Men and women wasting away . . . hemorrhaging . . . dying: Spoils entire beauty. Venus with an ulcer.

Doctor making his sounds again. Made them yesterday and the day before and the day before . . .

Wonder if instead of the usual, "about the same doctor" I said, "worse." Wouldn't make much difference. Couldn't do anything for me anyway. Might examine me, or give me pills or put me on diet, but I'd go on coughing just the same.

Just lay and lay and lay, waiting until I either kick the bucket or get cured. Neither of them would be bad. It's this damn laying around and waiting to see which it will be.

Lou's come back to the san. Same old story. Couldn't compete with healthy workers. Don't dare tell the boss he's a con . . . might get fired. Relapse. Now back to the bed for another couple of years.

Mailman's coming. Wonder if he has anything for me. Hope to Jesus he's brought me my *New Masses*. Been waiting for it a whole month now.

IRVING S. KREITZBERG.

Duarte, Calif.

## A Fighter for 69 Years

Dear Friends:

I like your magazine. I was born in 1860 (Abolitionist!) Disciple of Edward Bellamy—now a respectful Bolshevik humanitarian and Fact Promoter. My latter day heroes in brief, are Eugene Debs, Upton Sinclair, Dr. Steinmetz and "Bill" Haywood. Had I more than a meager income you folks would be given funds gladly and freely. Alas and Alack! (Don't let him deceive you,—he gave—Ed.)

Sincerely and Socially,

Greenfield, N. H.

W. M. WOOD.

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Mary Heaton Vorse*—has just returned from Elizabethton, Tenn. Her stories of the textile strike were sent to labor papers thru the *Federated Press*. Her latest novel *Second Cabin* has been published recently.

*Edward Newhouse*—a young college student, is seventeen years old. His first published sketch *I Look For a Job* appeared in our June issue.

*Adolph Dehn*—is well known to the readers of the *Masses* and the *New Masses*. His work has appeared in many publications in this country and abroad and was recently exhibited at the Weyhe Gallery in New York.

*Ed Falkowski*—a young American miner, is making a study of mining conditions in Europe. He is now working in the Rhur mines in Germany. He is leaving soon to work in the mines of Russia.

*Charles Yale Harrison*—contributes to newspapers and magazines. He is also contributing editor of the *New Masses*. During the world war he served with the 3rd Brigade of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Flanders and northern France. At present he is at work on a war book.

*William Siegel*—has contributed drawings to almost every issue of the *New Masses*. His work is often seen in *Judge*, the *New Yorker* and other national publications.

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